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# GUARDIAN

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## DEPARTMENTS

With his wife Nancy looking on, Lt. Col. (Retired) Albert Gomez receives the Legion of Merit medal from Brig. Gen. Alan Gayhart in a Gowen Field ceremony on 12 June. The award capped Gomez's 27 years as a Soldier in the U.S. Army, 8 years of which were spent as the Idaho National Guard Inspector General. Gomez said, "the award brought closure to my career of over 32 years, part of which was spent as a cadet at West Point. I felt honored to receive the medal in front of so many of my friends and colleagues." Gomez now works in a civilian capacity with JFHQ-Idaho.



### ON THE COVER:

• 124th ASOS training  
Photo: Lt. Col. Tim Marsano

• Spc. Jedidiah Stewart during Best Warrior Competitions  
Photo: 1st Sgt. Robert Moyle

• National Guard Outstanding Airmen of the Year Staff Sgt. Jonathan Sawmiller  
Photo: Tech. Sgt. Becky Vanshur

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# 124th ASOS trains for Iraq deployment



With an Apache helicopter overhead, JTACs work to coordinate strikes on simulated insurgent targets near Grand View, Idaho. "Insurgents" simulated planting roadside bombs and firing at the helicopters with surface-to-air missiles.

Photo: Lt. Col. Tim Marsano

By Lt. Col. Tim Marsano, Public Affairs Officer

**A**s nearly two dozen airmen of the prepared for their May deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, they trained with pilots of the 190th Fighter Squadron and the 1-183rd Aviation Battalion in southern Idaho April 17.

The 124th ASOS's mission is to provide forward air controllers in support of front line Army maneuver units to coordinate and control close air support missions of the Air Force and joint forces in support of the ground battle. Its personnel provide coordination between Army command posts at all levels and Air Force and joint force command centers.

During this training exercise, centered at the Saylor Creek range and the City of Grand View near Mountain Home, 124th ASOS Joint terminal attack controllers worked closely with A-10 and Apache pilots to gather

situational awareness of potential ground targets and to call in airstrikes as needed to support troops on the ground. JTACs handled a number of scenarios prescribed by 124th ASOS training officer Maj. Al Danza.

"In exercises like this we've done in the past, I've heard from an A-10 pilot, an Apache pilot and JTACs that it was the single best training they've ever gotten," said 124th ASOS Commander Lt. Col. Bill Iuliano. But putting together a scenario like this is no easy task. "There's a lot of coordination involved, with the Bureau of Land Management, the Native Americans, the town, the Forest Service, the police. The challenge is when you get into towns. There are a lot of buildings in the way, and the aircraft have to be in certain spots where they can see what's going on." ■

## Idaho airmen deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom

By Tech. Sgt. Sarah Pokorney, 124th Wing Public Affairs

Airmen from the 124th Air Support Operations Squadron departed May 27 from Gowen Field to serve in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In their deployed location, the team will support a Minnesota Army National Guard unit and conduct their wartime mission of advising the Army ground commander on air and space power and coordinating close air support and armed reconnaissance.

Air Liaison Officer Maj. Albert said the team completed two months of pre-deployment training at Gowen Field and at Fort Lewis, Wash.

"This is an experienced group; all but a few have deployed before and some eight or nine times," said 124th ASOS training officer Maj. Al Danza.

The deployed team is slated to serve a five- to six-month tour in country and will be replaced in the fall by another team of ASOS airmen.

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# Idaho enters partnership with Cambodia

**Maj. Candis Olmstead, Public Affairs, JFHQ-ID**

The Idaho National Guard is in the process of forging a new relationship with Cambodia through the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program after receiving official notification of our partner nation from the bureau in August 2008.

Col. Tim Kelly, state strategic planner, and Capt. Steve Kaminsky, SPP coordinator – both from JFHQ-ID – traveled to Cambodia in May to introduce themselves to Cambodian officials and establish Idaho's interest

in working with its new partner nation.

The initial task was to determine how the IDNG can be integrated into existing government and civilian programs to support and assist the developing nation. Kelly and Kaminsky met with Cambodian officials in order to establish goals and objectives and to conduct strategic planning for activities that will begin next year.

The primary request from Cambodia was for assistance with disaster management

and emergency response. But there are many additional areas where the nation can learn a lot from Idaho's military and civilian programs. Establishing better programs for environmental resource management and agricultural management, integrating an improved education model, and strengthening governance to combat corruption are a few additional areas that may benefit Cambodia in this new partnership.

*Partnership continued on page 5*

(Above) Members of the maintenance assessment team, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Leon Hatfield, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kirt Bullock, 1st Sgt. Barry Fransden and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Ed Barnowski, take a moment for a photo with members of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces during their initial visit in May. Photo: Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kirt Bullock



# SPP relationships have matured well, McKinley says

By Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke  
National Guard Bureau

The National Guard's State Partnership Program, started as a confidence-building measure between formerly hostile nations, has grown into solid, long-standing alliances, the chief of the National Guard Bureau told participants at a recent SPP conference in Stuttgart, Germany.

"The relationship has matured well," said Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley. "For those of you who have participated in events around the world, you know how important the program is for building partnership capacity," he said.

It was the visionary leadership of retired Lt. Gen. John Conaway, a former chief of the National Guard Bureau, who with Gen. John Shalikashvili, the former commander of European Command and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, created the program. "Their vision together collectively ... shaped an environment so that we can today build on those roots," McKinley said.

In the early 1990s, the United States had just finished fighting a cold war that resulted in a changed world environment. We witnessed the rise of a solidarity movement, free elections in Poland, fall of the Berlin Wall, and the demise of the Warsaw Pact as the Soviet Union fell apart. "We had a small group of fragile nations struggling to adapt to democratic institutions and to develop armed forces that were self-reliant and transformed from the Soviet model," McKinley said.



Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, speaks at the State Partnership Program Conference in Stuttgart, Germany, June 15, saying the program "has matured well" and has grown into solid, long-standing alliances.

Photo: Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen

Both generals realized that generations of immigrants had come to America to establish new roots. "Many had joined the National Guard and perhaps a synergy could be built, so they created the state partnership initiative," McKinley said.

The Joint Staff also envisions the National Guard building partnership capacity programs into a \$50 million program. In fiscal year 2009, the SPP operates with a budget of about \$8 million. "Those are pretty exciting numbers when you think about where we have come from," he said.

McKinley encouraged the states to "keep doing what you are doing. Keep building these relationships. Maintain your basic military-to-military events, but look for new opportunities to do more in the military-civilian and civil security cooperation areas. Continue to generate the good ideas. Your enhanced SPP approach is an impressive example of such forward thinking." ■

*Partnership continued from page 4*

"At this point, they're all just ideas," said Col. Kelly. "We'll work with the nation to determine which areas to focus on and how we can work together to improve them," he said.

As a first step, a maintenance assessment team that accompanied Kelly and Kaminsky to Cambodia reviewed the nation's vehicle maintenance program, particularly important since they now possess a fleet of M35A2 two-and-a-half-ton cargo trucks provided by the United States. They were able to identify and provide recommendations for improvements to the program.

The request for a state partnership came in a Sept. 22, 2005, letter from Cambodia to the U.S. embassy. The approval process, including matching the country up with a state, took almost three years. Partnerships are created through discussions among countries, ministers of defense, the U.S. ambassador, regional combatant commanders, adjutants general, governors and the chief of the National Guard Bureau, which administers the SPP. Planning and coordination to establish new partnerships is a lengthy process.

"We're just getting our feet wet with this program right now," said Kelly, who main-

tains oversight of the SPP for Idaho. "Now the work really begins for us as we figure out how we're going to execute the program, and then start doing it," he said.

The SPP incorporates military and civilian aspects, and the association must incorporate nonmilitary participants at every level. The partner nation has access to the National Guard's military capabilities and other government and civil institutions such as business organizations, fire and police departments, and universities. With these activities, each program is tailored to meet the needs of the host country as well as U.S. strategic goals and interests. ■





# Upgraded A-10 Simulator trains pilots for real-world scenarios

By Tech. Sgt. Sarah Pokorney, 124th Wing Public Affairs

A-10 pilots here began training June 3 on a newly upgraded Full Mission Trainer to simulate real-world missions in combat zones.

Known to 190th Fighter Squadron pilots as the "Virtual Hog," the new simulator mimics equipment and capabilities of the new A-10C model aircraft with fully operational hands-on controls and two large multi-function color displays that provide a moving map display. It can replicate the failure of every moving part of the A-10C and still provide a safe and realistic environment for complex emergency procedures training.

"We are lucky to have it. It allows us, in a static environment, to perfect the new C-model system and use the live flying time to practice the tactical applications," said 190th A-10 pilot 1st Lt. Andrew Labrum.

From the exterior, the simulator looks like a freestanding black box the size of a single car garage. The opening on one end reveals a dark cave-like passage extending deep into the heart of the trainer to the cockpit.

Once seated in the cockpit, the pilot is surrounded on all sides by a faint glow emitted from flat displays. After the pilot takes the controls, a full field of vision displays a vividly

illuminated landscape in hostile territory.

The simulator was upgraded to reflect the Precision Engagement modifications currently being made to convert the A-10 A+ model aircraft to A-10C models. This allows them to identify and strike targets from higher altitudes and greater distances without sacrificing accuracy. Idaho's A-10C conversions are scheduled to be complete by November.

"These improvements allow us to employ smart weapons like Joint Direct Attack Munitions and Wind Corrected Munitions Dispensers," said Labrum.

*A-10 Simulator continued on page 7*

(Above) Lt. Col. Anthony "Sumo" Brown of the 190th Fighter Squadron, conducts training on the upgraded A-10C Full Mission Trainer. The FMT simulator mimics the real-world A-10C, complete with Precision Engagement modifications with fully operational hands-on controls and instrument panel, providing pilots with a safe and realistic training environment. Photo: Staff Sgt. Robert Barney



*A-10 Simulator continued from page 6*

In addition to the upgraded simulator, the 190th has five hands-on-throttle-and-stick trainers that are just two months old. The HOTAS do not have the enclosed environment of the FMT but they do offer effective interactive training with a 56-inch flat-panel display, touch-screen instrument panel and hands-on controls.

"The simulators display classified and unclassified locations with real threats and targets that we can react to," said 190th A-10 pilot 1st. Lt. Ryan Brown.

In the near future, the simulators will be connected to a virtual battle space where pilots can train alongside pilots from around the globe. This prepares them to react to a variety of scenarios with squadrons they may serve with in-theater. The experience gained from this virtual battle space is essential to testing A-10C war fighting capabilities, preventing collateral damage and ultimately saving lives. ■

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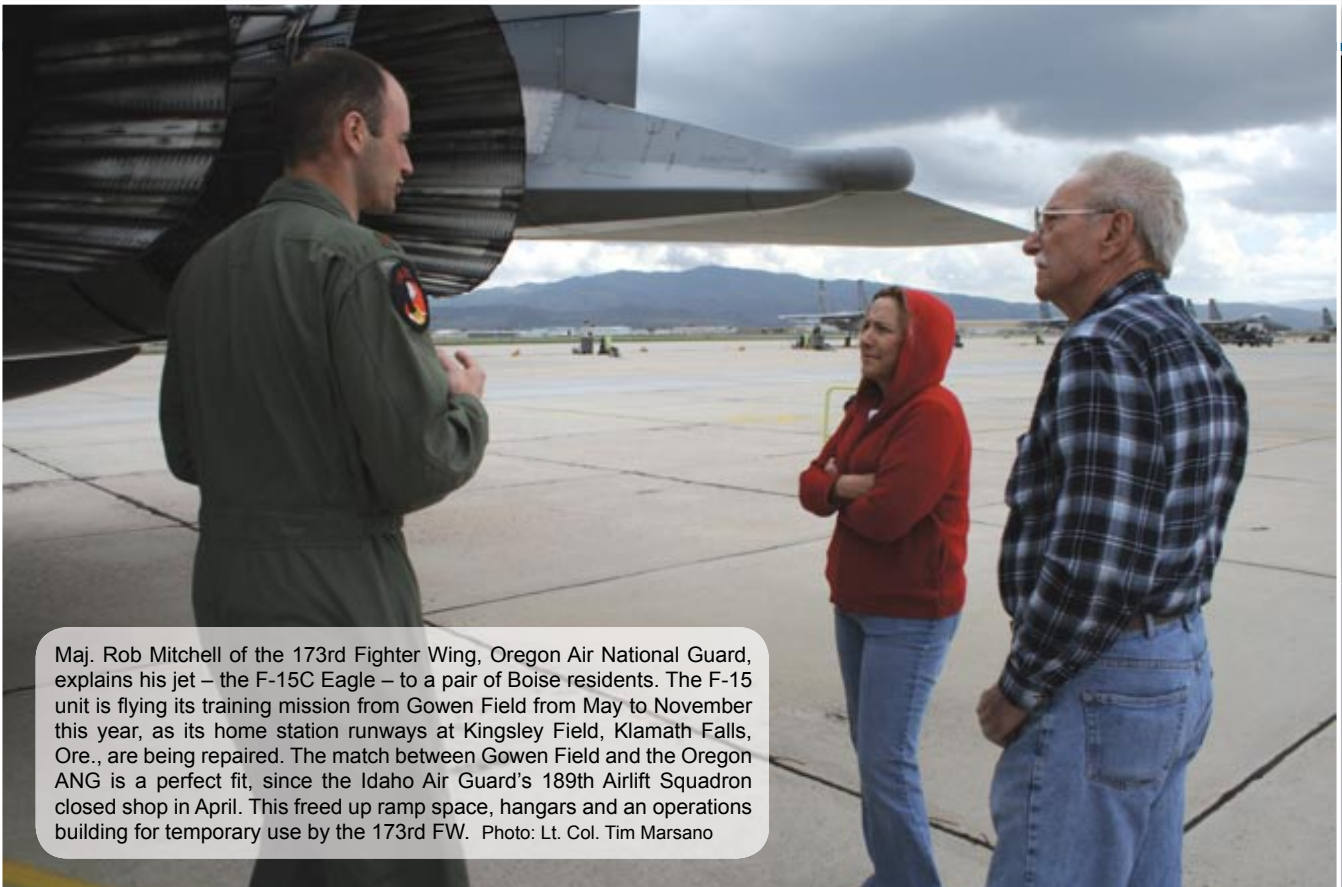
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Maj. Rob Mitchell of the 173rd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard, explains his jet – the F-15C Eagle – to a pair of Boise residents. The F-15 unit is flying its training mission from Gowen Field from May to November this year, as its home station runways at Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Ore., are being repaired. The match between Gowen Field and the Oregon ANG is a perfect fit, since the Idaho Air Guard's 189th Airlift Squadron closed shop in April. This freed up ramp space, hangars and an operations building for temporary use by the 173rd FW. Photo: Lt. Col. Tim Marsano



# Ashes in the wind:

## Disposing of our nation's flags

By Tech. Sgt. Becky Vanshur, 124th Wing Public Affairs

GOWEN FIELD, Idaho — Members of the 124th Wing Honor Guard led a rare ceremony here June 6 to properly retire several of our nation's flags.

The Honor Guard has many respected roles and traditions to hold. This is another duty they are proud to be a part of. Members also used the ceremony as an opportunity to teach others about the proper way to dispose of a United States flag, including members of the 124th Student Flight, the wing's newest members who participate in drill weekends while awaiting basic training dates.

Many service members do not know how the military disposes of these grand flags. It can be an emotional time. These old, weathered and tattered flags represent the history of our unit, our nation and our pride toward both. This is why, after all these years we have held on to these flags, never disposing of them until now when it can be done with the proper respect, said Honor Guard member Senior Master Sgt. Tammy Clement.

A crowd gathered to watch the ceremony. As a sign of respect, photography and video documentation is never allowed, Clement said.

It's important for a service member to understand the flag, its purpose and the reason we dispose of them with such honor. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing, which is why a part of the ceremony is to detach the blue union from the red and white stripes. This ensures that it is no longer a living and functioning flag and may then be disposed of properly. The proper way to dispose of the flag is to burn it, starting with the red and white stripes and then separately to burn the union. A large group assisted in the flag disposal ceremony, in which no part of any flag was allowed to touch the ground; each part was received by waiting arms and hands, then passed along to its final rest.

After the flags are completely burned to ashes, they are spread over an appropriate and respected piece of land.

"The ashes have to be scattered, and we have a large box of flags to be disposed of. We are going to put all the ashes into one barrel and scatter them in the wind," Clement said.

The 124th Wing Honor Guard spread the ashes over the empty field adjacent to the firing range at Gowen Field. ■

*"No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America."*  
— Section 8 of the U.S. Flag Code

How should you dispose of a U.S. flag that is beyond repair, old, worn, or weathered?

For civilians, the answer is to give it to your local government, military base, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, American Legion Post or VFW to dispose of by burning in a dignified manner.

For military members, the answer is to give it to your local Honor Guard.

To read more on the Flag's Code Rules and Regulations, visit the website:

<http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagcode.htm>

For more information on our nation's flag, visit the website:

<http://www.usa-flag-site.org>

124th Wing Honor Guard member Tech. Sgt. Michael Clement explains the purpose of a flag disposal ceremony to four members of the Idaho Air Guard Student Flight, new members of the wing who have not yet attended basic military training. From left to right, Jeremy Johnson, Heidi Caye, Lindsay Coggins and Nicholas Jenson assisted the 124th Wing Honor Guard in the June 6 ceremony at Gowen Field.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Robert Barney





# Region 6 holds



# BEST WARRIOR COMPETITIONS

**By Command Sgt. Maj. Ken Downing  
Senior Enlisted Leader, Idaho National Guard**

Soldiers and NCOs from eight states gathered May 13-16 at Camp Murray, Wash., to compete in the 2009 Region 6 Soldier and NCO Best Warrior competition.

These soldiers and NCOs represented the winners of the Best Warrior competitions from Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Alaska, North Dakota, Wyoming, and South Dakota.

It was an intense competition that included an Army physical fitness test, weapons qualification, day and night land navigation, a written essay, timed obstacle course and a board appearance in Class A uniform.

The competition also featured warrior task testing conducted at the Fort Lewis Military Operations in Urban Terrain site. Tasks included conducting a vehicle search at an entry control point, conducting a personnel search and clearing buildings of enemy combatants, among other MOUT site tasks.

A 'Call for Fire' exercise event also took place, in which the competitors did not know where it was or what the task would be until they arrived at the event location.

The final event of the competition was the combatives competition. Competitors received points for various take-down moves, with winners resulting from the most points gained throughout the match or by pinning the opponent in a tap-out situation.

All competitors demonstrated strong character and professionalism as they dealt with long days, rain, heat and cold. It was easy to see the why these individuals were the best from their respective states.

Spc. Jedidiah Stewart represented Idaho as the winner of the Idaho Best Warrior competition. Stewart is a member of Det 1, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 148th Field Artillery Battalion, from Preston, Idaho. He competed hard throughout the competition and was the

winner of the timed obstacle course and the written essay portions of the competition.

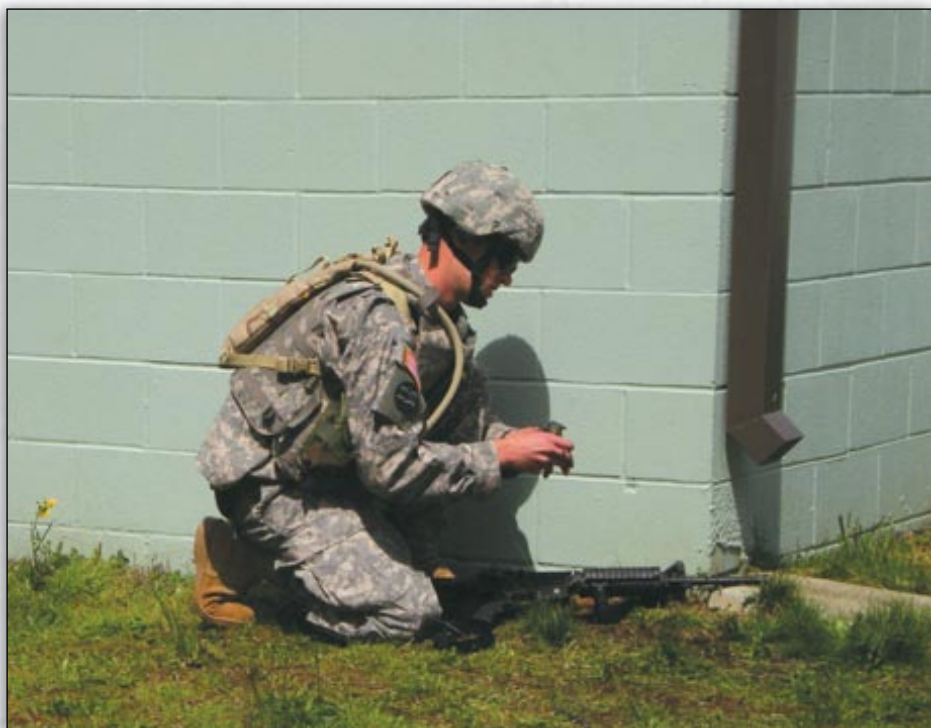
Sgt. Russell Mewes from Company D, 145th Brigade Support Battalion, out of Boise, competed in the NCO competition as the representative from Idaho. Mewes was the first runner-up in the Idaho Best NCO Warrior Competition. Because of an injury to Sgt. Robert Early, winner of the state competition, Mewes stepped up with only one month's preparation time to compete at the Region 6 events. Mewes performed extremely well in all events and was one of the few competitors to find and take appropriate measures in identifying a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device during the vehicle search testing. Mewes was also the winner of the combatives competition for the NCO Best Warrior event.

The overall winners of the competition, from Montana and North Dakota, will move on to the Army National Guard competition at Fort Benning, Ga., in August 2009.

In a letter of congratulations to the Idaho competitors, the Commanding General of the Idaho National Guard, Maj. Gen. Larry Lafrenz, thanked Stewart and Mewes for their hard work and dedication during the competition. "Although you were not the ultimate victors in the competition, you both are winners in my book, and the future of the enlisted corps of the Idaho Army National Guard is in good hands as demonstrated by your example," said Lafrenz.

For next year's regional competition, the Idaho Best Warrior competition will be conducted Oct. 1-4, 2009, at Gowen Field. Winners of this competition will compete at the Region 6 competition hosted by the Alaska Army National Guard at Fort Greely, Alaska, in May 2010.

Stewart and Mewes performed with great determination and expertise throughout the difficult and intense competition. Each man earned respect and congratulations for a job very well done. ■



During the warrior task testing portion of the competition at the MOUT site, Spc. Jedidiah Stewart prepares to throw a grenade at opposing forces. Photo: 1st Sgt. Robert Moyle





# A-10 'assembly-line' maintenance concept a model of efficiency

By Capt. Tony Vincelli, 124th Wing Public Affairs Officer

GOWEN FIELD, Idaho – A-10 maintenance personnel from the 124th Wing here are in the early stages of a new “assembly line” maintenance concept that may serve as a model for how U.S. Air Force aircraft maintenance is performed in the future.

Dubbed the Consolidated Install Program, the program began June 1 and is projected to save thousands of man hours and millions of dollars over the next year by installing up to 12 modifications at one time via Time Compliance Technical Orders. The program is designed to improve combat capability for the warfighter without impacting aircraft availability when compared to past ways of upgrading aircraft systems,

said Idaho Air Guard Capt. Eric Newman, project officer in charge.

The Air Force’s standard operating procedure for performing modifications of this type has typically been to release TCTOs that directed individual units to perform any required maintenance modifications to assigned aircraft at home station.

But after witnessing the recent success of A-10 wing repairs using a similar assembly line concept, Senior Master Sgt. Eric Krentz, HQ ACC functional area manager of A-10 Avionics Functional Manager systems, thought there may be a better way.

Enter the 124th Wing, Idaho Air National Guard maintainers, who have a proven track

record of success for past modifications on their own A-10s, will upgrade more than 130 of the Air Force’s 356 A-10s over the next year. According to Krentz, this is the first time an Air National Guard A-10 unit has been tapped to implement a Total Force Initiative in the A-10 community supporting active duty, Guard and Reserve A-10 units.

The A-10 Thunderbolt II “Warthog,” the Air Force’s premier close air support aircraft, is in the midst of a series of upgrades as part of the precision engagement modifications.

*A-10 Maintenance continued on page 11*

(Above) A team of Idaho Air National Guard maintainers from the 124th Wing at Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, reinstall the leading edges on the wing of a Maryland Air National Guard A-10 Thunderbolt II. The aircraft received a new AAR-47 infrared missile warning system June 16 as part of the A-10 Consolidated Install Program. Photo: Master Sgt. Tom Gloeckle, 124th Wing Public Affairs





Following installation of the AAR-47 infrared missile warning system, 124th Maintenance Squadron electrician Master Sgt. Scott Johnson conducts a continuity check to ensure that the system is running properly. The Idaho Air National Guard based at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, has employed 45 maintainers full-time for at least one year to perform this assembly line-style Consolidated Install Program on roughly one third of the Air Force's A-10 Thunderbolt II fleet.

*A-10 Maintenance continued from page 10*

These improvements to the aircraft's avionics, weapons delivery and communications systems are expected to extend the life of the aircraft – once slated for decommission prior to the first Gulf War – to 2030 or beyond.

According to Krentz, these consolidated modifications go beyond the A-10C model, or precision engagement upgrades, and contribute to sustained warfighting capabilities.

"The A-10 is not going anywhere. It is still the premier platform in the overseas area of operations," said Krentz.

Maintenance personnel here are in the midst of a coordinated effort, "attacking" each aircraft with a laser focus on speed, efficiency and safety, said Newman. By cutting the average down time of each aircraft by as much as three weeks if the repairs had been done at their home station, the captain and other maintainers hope to show the Air Force a new way of doing business.

getting an update that will allow communication beyond line of sight. Additional memory is being installed in the computer systems, and many other modifications further increase the combat capability of the A-10. The engines will run more efficiently thanks to a new fuel management system.

The project has also generated some creative ingenuity and out-of-the-box thinking for maintainers. Custom-made storage crates, maintenance stand-mounted tool bins and other ideas are already shaving time off the repairs to each aircraft, which will really add up in the long run, Newman said.

Air Force leaders have taken note. Col. Jon Sutterfield, chief of Air Combat Command's combat aircraft division, visited Gowen Field June 16 to assess the progress of the program.

"The teamwork, creativity and innovation of the team are very evident. They are constantly



Idaho Air National Guard avionics technician Senior Airman Dustin Martin, 124th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, completes installation of an aircraft panel from a Maryland Air National Guard A-10 June 16 after a final inspection of video lines as part of the A-10 Consolidated Install Program at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

"When an aircraft lands, it is like ants crawling on a hill," Newman said.

With so much to do and a self-imposed short timeline to do it in, maintainers get to work right away. Infrared sensors that automatically dispense chaff and flare are installed on the wings and tail. The radio system integration that allows for easier management for aircrews and significantly enhances communication with ground forces is

thinking about how to do it better, faster and more effectively. I am very impressed with what they've done so far," Sutterfield said.

This new mission for the 124th Wing couldn't have come at a better time. The project gives 45 Air National Guard members full-time employment. Many of them were supporting the former C-130 airlift mission, which was recently relocated through a base realignment and closure decision. Many first-class maintenance facilities were also left vacant as a result, including the hangars where the A-10 upgrades are taking place.

Airmen like Tech. Sgt. Jason Fontaine, a former C-130 loadmaster, are learning new skills and gaining valuable experience that will allow them to make a more educated decision when it comes time to formally retrain to a new Air Force Specialty Code. "Sergeant Fontaine and several others came highly recommended, so we picked them up for this project," said Newman. "They have worked extremely hard to learn quickly and have become great assets to the team."

Newman and all the members of this important project know full well this is a marathon, not a sprint. He said many personnel will rotate through different duties in the project to avoid burnout. "We want the avionics people to learn structures, the structural people to learn the electrical piece, and so on," Newman said.

Everyone is focused on exceeding expectations, which might equate to more work of this type in the future. "This project is a pathfinder in a lot of ways. It may show us ways of doing things better, faster, smarter and cheaper to get new capabilities on jets," said Krentz. ■





## *National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year* **Staff Sgt. Jonathan Sawmiller**

Staff Sgt Jonathan Sawmiller, an emergency management journeyman from the 124th Civil Engineering Flight, instructs Staff. Sgt. Lonnie Kemp of the Idaho Air Guard on vehicle protection and awareness during a recent training session. Sawmiller was named Outstanding Airman of the Year for the Air National Guard in a June ceremony in Washington, D.C. Photo: Tech. Sgt. Becky Vanshur

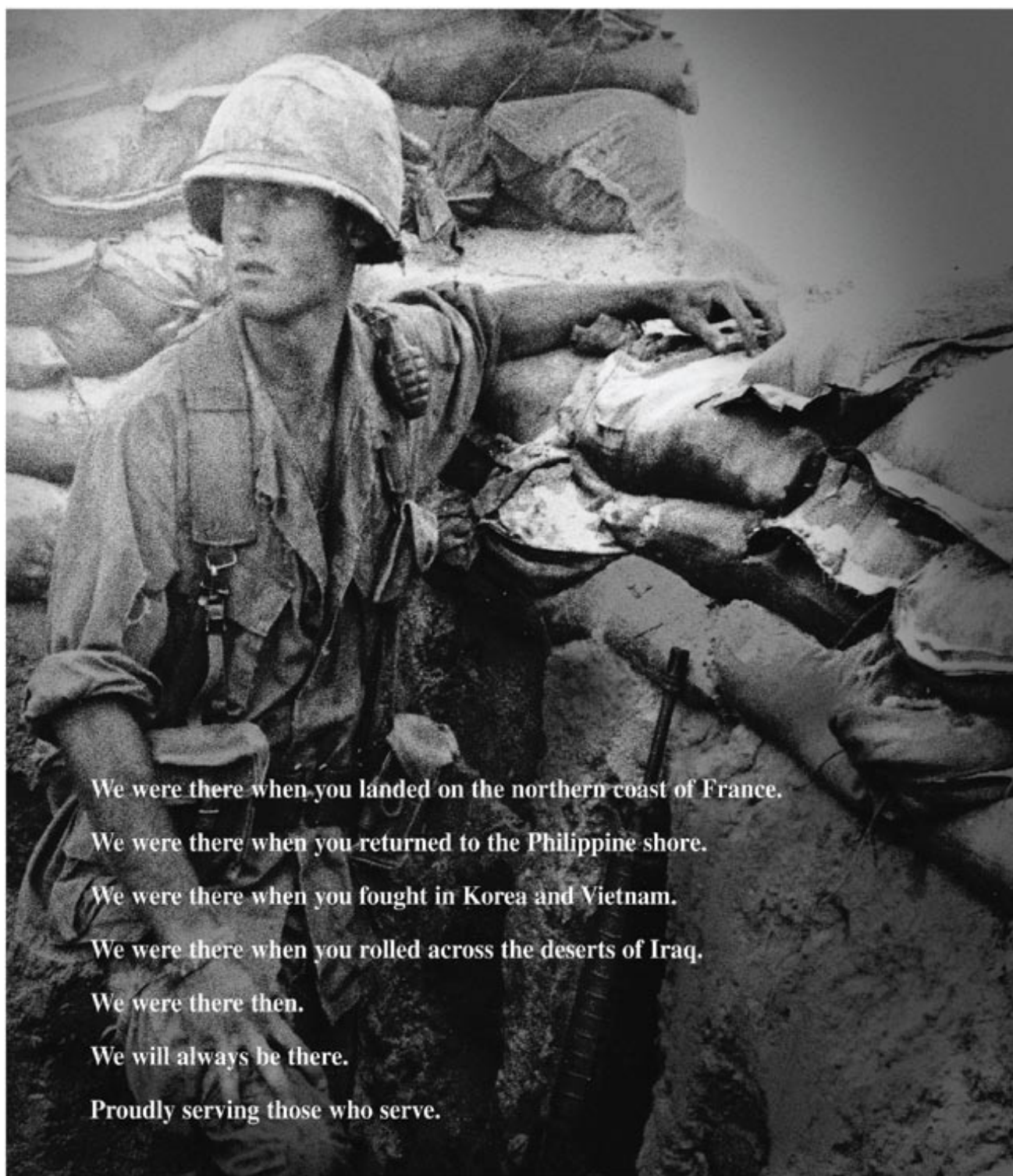


## **1-183 Aviation Battalion Changes Command**

In a June 18 ceremony at Gowen Field, Lt. Col. Douglas Smith takes the 1-183 Aviation Battalion colors from Col. Mike Garshak, Army Aviation Group Commander. With those colors comes command of the battalion. Smith said he's humbled and honored to be entrusted with the battalion and its soldiers. "I'm focused on what needs to be done and thrilled about taking on this challenge," he said.

Photo: Spc. David Blake





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Left to right in photo: 1st Lt. Aaron Davis, 2/116 Cavalry Regiment; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Walcom, HHC 116 CBCT; Staff Sgt. Caryl Whitlatch, 124th Wing; Master Sgt. Jeffrey Guzi, JFHQ/ID-HRO; Sgt. Terry Groom, HHC 116 CBCT; Sgt. Ben Blessing, 25th Army Band.

## Idaho fields team for the National Guard Marathon

The Idaho National Guard marathon team competed this year in the Lincoln National Guard Marathon May 3, 2009, in Lincoln, Neb. The Idaho team fielded six athletes to compete in a field of 163 soldiers and airmen from around the United States.

"This event is a showcase of National Guard athletes from around the country, and it's a great way to build spirit and morale," said team captain Master Sgt. Jeff Guzi. "It was great this year to have this many runners, the most we've had since I got involved 15 years ago. I'd especially like to note the great performance of 1st Lt. Aaron Davis, who made the All-Guard team and will be competing in a number of events throughout this year." ■



# Buchenwald liberator Leo Hymas shares his experiences at Gowen Field

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Tim Marsano, public affairs officer

On April 23, as part of Holocaust Remembrance Week, Gowen Field hosted WWII veteran Leo Hymas, one of the U.S. Army soldiers who liberated the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in April 1944 near Weimar, Germany.

Buchenwald was a slave-labor encampment containing an armament factory for the Nazi war machine. According to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, some 250,000 prisoners were held there between 1937-1945. Approximately 56,000 were killed, including about 11,000 Jews. Thousands of prisoners were worked to death building weapons or laboring in a local quarry; many thousands died from various other Nazi atrocities.

Hymas, drafted into the U.S. Army during the war at age 18 and trained as a machine gunner with the 97th Infantry Division's 303rd Battalion, had advanced into Germany with Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army. His unit found itself in Weimar, Germany, when Hymas and a few other soldiers were detailed to go and check out a suspicious barbed-wire fence near the town that turned out to be the infamous concentration camp.

He explained that he and his small band took on the dozen or so Nazi guards who had not already fled the oncoming Allied forces and killed the SS troops before using an explosive device to open the fence and liberate the 18,000 remaining prisoners.

Hymas said the remaining guards were in the process of systematically murdering those remaining prisoners when his unit got to the camp.

Hymas said he kept his story and the terrible memories to himself for years, because he was told upon his return to the U.S. that he should "put it behind him," but in the 1990s, he began to talk of his memories in part to come to terms with the atrocious things he saw at Buchenwald. He has spoken with many groups since that time, traveling with and exhibiting artifacts he obtained during the war years in Germany and in Asia. Before his honorable discharge, Hymas was assigned for a time as an occupation-force soldier in Japan. ■



Mr. Hymas was pleasantly surprised and moved to see an M-4 Sherman Tank, almost exactly like the one he rode on in WWII, on display at Gowen Field. He reminisced about his experiences on the tank and his experiences as a concentration camp liberator during a visit to Gowen Field on April 23.

Leo Hymas shows his disdain for a Nazi banner he obtained during his time as a Soldier in Germany during WWII.





## Monthly Premiums Decrease for TRICARE Reserve Select

Effective Jan. 1, 2009, TRICARE reduced the rates for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS). Monthly premiums for TRS individual coverage dropped 44% from \$81.00 to \$47.51, and TRS family

coverage dropped 29% from \$253.00 to \$180.17.

The 2009 National Defense Authorization Act, section 704, required TRICARE to analyze Reserve Select costs from 2006 and 2007, and set new rates for 2009.

Established in 2005, TRS is a premium-based health plan for National Guard and Reserve personnel available for purchase by members of the Selected Reserve who are not eligible for or enrolled in Federal Employee Health Benefit plans.

TRS provides a health plan option to members of the Selected Reserve and their families when they are not on active duty status. The TRS plan delivers coverage similar to TRICARE Standard and Extra to eligible members who purchase the coverage and pay monthly premiums. TRS also features continuously open enrollment.

For more information about TRS visit the TRICARE Web site at <http://www.tricare.mil>.

*Editor's Note: This year, TriWest, the regional management agency of TriCare, contributed \$20,000 to the Idaho Guard and Reserve Family Support Fund. ■*

## Carpenter appointed as acting director of Army Guard

From South Dakota National Guard



Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, appointed Maj. Gen. Raymond Carpenter of the South Dakota National Guard to serve as the acting director of the Army National Guard on May 29.

As acting director, Carpenter has oversight over the manning, training, equipping and readiness of over 364,000 Army National Guard Soldiers in the 54 states and territories.

Currently, over 63,000 of those personnel are mobilized to support operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Kosovo and the Horn of Africa as well as homeland security missions.

Carpenter joined the South Dakota Army National Guard in 1967 as an engineer. He has held several assignments and leadership positions including executive officer of a 5,000-man task force conducting a humanitarian mission in Panama to construct roads, schools and clinics. He has been recognized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with the prestigious Silver de Fleury medal for his outstanding contributions.

He has also served as the chief of staff and the assistant adjutant general for the South Dakota Army National Guard. After leaving South Dakota, he served as the deputy commanding general for the Maneuver Support Center and had a number of duties including responsibility for overseeing joint training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

From 2006 until this appointment, Carpenter served as the special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard.

In this new position, he will interface daily with Department of the Army leadership as well as leaders from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He will be the lead voice in all forums representing Army National Guard interests from force structure and equipment to deployments and family support until the next director is confirmed.

Carpenter's family currently resides in Rapid City, S.D. ■



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# Strong Bonds strengthens marriage relationships

**By Capt. Tracy Giles**  
**124th Wing Public Affairs**

Thirty five married couples from Idaho's Army and Air National Guards attended a Strong Bonds marriage enrichment event in McCall May 29-31. The event was sponsored by the guard's Joint Family Program.

The weekend featured material from the Prevention and Relationship Program encouraging couples to increase their connections with each other and communicate effectively. Professional relationship and financial counselors were also made available for couples to meet with in private.

"In addition to the great location and scenery, couples were provided with skills to increase communication and strengthen their relationships," said Major Jeff Taylor, 124th Wing chaplain. "This not only strengthens the marriage but the whole family as well. Our goal is to see families strengthened to handle the added stress that Guard families endure ... TDY's, deployments, and balancing Guard responsibilities with civilian jobs."

The three-day event included a full day and a half of classroom instruction with opportunities for couples to practice their newly acquired communication skills.

At the end of the event, couples were asked if they would recommend this program for other soldiers and airmen.

## Here are a few of their responses:

- "Yes. I believe if they come with an open mind and a willingness to learn it will benefit anyone."
- "As a spouse, I feel this is a great way to help with the morale of soldiers and family. I feel cared about by the Guard."
- "Yes. It enabled us to make time to reconnect. That's hard to do in our busy, busy lives."

Strong Bonds empowers military members and their loved ones with relationship-building skills, and connects them to community health and support resources. For information visit:

**[www.strongbonds.org](http://www.strongbonds.org)**

The next Strong Bonds PREP weekend is scheduled for Aug. 28 to 30 in Sun Valley, Idaho. Free lodging and meals will be provided.

Contact your chaplain for details if you are interested in attending. ■





# Summer Safety

## Summer's here – with opportunities for creative mishaps and injury

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Virgel Clark, State Safety Manager

### Some tips for summer safety:

- Yard work on the agenda? Think the project through before getting started. And if you're going to be digging, it's always worthwhile to check on where the utilities are planted. When it comes to safety in any pursuit, a little thinking in advance can go a long way toward avoiding tragedy.
- Going hiking? Be sure to take a map and compass if you're not familiar with the area. Tell someone where you're going and when you plan to return. Be aware of the critters out there...from ticks (you don't need Lyme disease...look for a little red spot that becomes a rash) to rattlesnakes (they'll often try to get away if aware of your presence) and take the necessary precautions. Dress appropriately for the temperature and activity level and remember to take – and drink! – plenty of water.
- Mosquitoes can be more than just an irritant – West Nile virus remains a risk here in Idaho. Long-sleeved shirts and full-length trousers can help keep mosquitoes at bay, but don't neglect to use an effective mosquito repellent containing DEET.
- Reduce your risk of heat injury – watch your exertion level. Arrange your activities to do the most strenuous during the cooler time of day. Take frequent breaks. Drink plenty of water regularly and often, even if you don't feel thirsty. Remember, drinks with caffeine or alcohol will dehydrate you. A variety of medications can make you more susceptible, such as antihistamines, high blood pressure medicine and diuretics. Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Sunburn. Limit exposure to direct sunlight; wear protective clothing, a hat and sunglasses, and use sunscreen. Use water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher and UV A and B protection. For best effectiveness, apply it 30 minutes before going outdoors and reapply at least every two hours. If you do get sunburned, cold, damp compresses are now recommended for relief instead of butter or ice packs.
- Grilling on the gas barbeque? When lighting the grill, keep the top open, and if the grill does not light in the first several attempts, turn it off and wait five minutes to allow gas to dissipate before trying it again. Keep an ABC-rated fire extinguisher nearby. Don't grill in a garage, tent or other enclosed area; keep the grill 15-20 feet from the house. Every time you change the gas tank, check the connections and hoses; a solution of soapy water can be used to check for leaks. And if the grill portion catches on fire, simply turn off the burners. Sprinkling some baking soda on the flames can be effective in dousing grease fires on the grill. If using a charcoal grill and fluid starter, be sure to follow the directions carefully, and never use gasoline to start charcoal.
- When you're headed for the swimming hole....never swim alone. Don't rely on loose flotation devices such as inflatable rafts – they may get away from you. Alcohol and swimming don't mix...and look out for friends who may be overdoing it. Check out what's underneath the surface before jumping into unfamiliar waters. If



you want to swim a long distance, stay parallel to the shore. Never leave a child alone near water...accidents happen in seconds. And don't swim in high traffic areas populated by boats or jet skis...they may not see you.

- Ahoy boaters! Nothing that can happen on a boat is more distressful than a fire. Always carry an ABC-rated fire extinguisher, and be careful when re-fueling. Tell a landlubber friend where you're going and when you expect to return. Spending an unintended night in a secluded bay of some reservoir could be miserable. Take along a cell phone or 2-way radio to call for help if needed. Some other boating basics: know your boat's capacity and don't exceed it; be sure to have individual flotation devices for everyone. If you're towing a skier, be sure someone's always watching the skier. Keep a weather eye out and plan accordingly – summer thunderstorms can come up quickly. Be aware of unmarked underwater or floating obstacles that could ruin your boating day. And remember: alcohol and boating don't mix.
- Planning on dusting off the old motorcycle and need to sharpen up those riding skills? Your safety office has lots of STAR and MSF Rider Skills courses available... just call us at 272-4203 and we'll help you find one that fits your schedule. ■

**Have a safe and fun-filled summer!**



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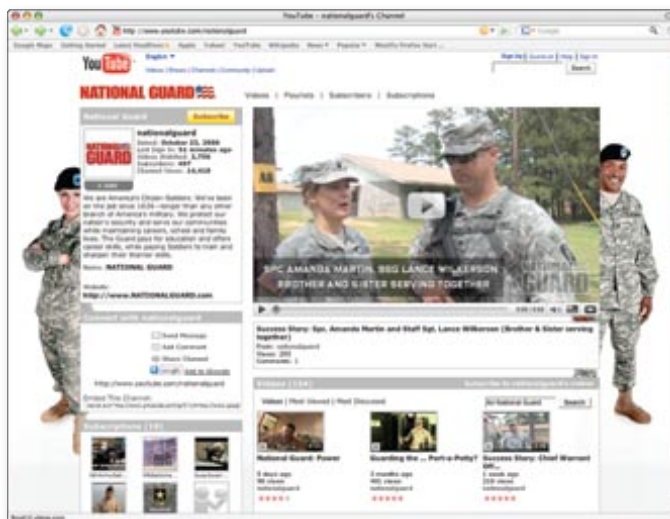


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## Guard looks to new media to attract recruits

By Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The end strength for the Army and Air National Guard remained above 100 percent in May due in part to various social media outlets, such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, currently being used by both services.

“Social networking and new media as a whole is the fastest growing communication medium out there, and it would be ignorant of us as recruiting professionals not to use that to get to our market, said Tech Sgt. Matt Leas, noncommissioned officer in charge of advertising for the Air Guard. “It’s a softer approach, which is one way to reach a lot of folks. It’s not in your face, join today type stuff.”

The Air Guard has its own channel on YouTube, while the Army Guard has a presence on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Flickr.

Although one of the goals is to bring in new recruits, tracking a direct link between those who visit the Army or Air Guard pages on one of the social networking sites and those who actually enlist is difficult.

“I can tell you how many people have clicked through from our YouTube page to our GoANG Web site,” said Leas. “At that point, I don’t know how many of those people have turned into a lead.”

Leas did say that 25,000 people have clicked through to the Air Guard Web site from the YouTube page. “If you figure 10

percent, which is the recruiting standard for the numbers that become leads, so 10 percent of 25,000 are more than likely going to the recruiters.”

Having a presence on these sites has other benefits as well. “This is the first time that people have been able to interact so directly and immediately with what we are doing in the Guard,” said Rick Breitenfeldt, who oversees new media initiatives for the National Guard Bureau.

“Our NGB (social media) sites don’t focus on recruiting as much as they do on telling our joint story and letting people who support the Guard have a place to share their opinions and connect with others who are in the same boat.”

Leas has noticed similar instances with the Air Guard’s YouTube page. “It’s just proven to be effective, because it’s the first time that that people can interact with the organization or something that happens in the organization,” he said. “Like, if we respond to a hurricane they can get out there and be like my husband or my wife responded to that. So it causes our organization to be discussed, which is a cool thing as it puts it in the forefront of people’s minds.”

And that, ultimately, is the goal of using these Web sites. “That’s why (it) is so good,” said Leas. “It’s just a huge medium to reach lots and lots of people in a different way than has ever been done.” ■



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